

[CHAPTER 5]

Developing Vocabulary in the Later Grades

Ryan, Julie, and Andrew gather in a corner of their classroom to complete work on a group project. Ryan pantomimes stretching in his seat, and then, grinning, grabs Julie's pencil out of her hand.

JULIE: It baffles me why you're such a buffoon.

RYAN: Oh, don't be so antagonistic.

ANDREW: Cut out the bantering, you two. We have work to do here.

When effective instruction is part of classroom practice and students are encouraged to use the sophisticated words they are learning, they begin to take true ownership of the words that are presented. Their ownership can be seen in the ease with which they can use the words in everyday exchanges. Even trading insults takes on a new character! The purpose of this chapter is to describe the kind of instruction that inspires and supports word ownership by students in the upper elementary grades, middle school, and high school.

FREQUENT, RICH, AND EXTENDED INSTRUCTION

In this chapter, we focus on effective vocabulary instruction after words have been introduced. First, we provide a general overview of what we

call frequent, rich, and extended instruction. Then, we provide examples of such instruction with lesson sequences for specific sets of words for students in the upper elementary grades, middle school, and high school.

One of the strongest findings about vocabulary instruction, whether direct instruction or learning words from context, is that multiple encounters are required before a word is really known (e.g., Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986), that is, if it is to affect a student's comprehension and become a useful and permanent part of the student's vocabulary repertoire. So, the vocabulary instruction discussed in this chapter is toward that end. The design of the instruction and many of the examples used come from our earlier vocabulary studies (e.g., Beck et al., 1982; McKeown et al., 1983, 1985).

In our vocabulary research, the instruction we provided was designed around three features:

1. Frequent encounters with the words
2. Richness of instruction
3. Extension of word use beyond the classroom

Frequency

Our basic design was to introduce about 10 words per week and present activities around the words daily. By the end of the week, each word had often been the focus of attention (some 8–10 times). We also included words from previous weeks in the activities so that those words would be maintained.

Richness

By "rich" instruction, we mean instruction that goes beyond definitional information to get students actively involved in using and thinking about word meanings and creating lots of associations among words. The instructional activities varied widely, but the pattern was similar each week. We began with the kind of word introduction described in Chapter 3 that involved discussion around a student-friendly explanation. Students had log sheets of the words and their meanings that they kept in a vocabulary notebook.

Throughout the rest of the week, we made sure to provide opportunities for students to:

- Use the words.
- Explore facets of word meaning.
- Consider relationships among words.

Students' Use of Words

Having students create uses for words was important to ensure that the word was an active part of their vocabularies. If students did not know how to create a context around a word, then the word would become just an isolated piece of information. Engaging students in talking about situations a word would describe or in considering instances when the word would be an appropriate choice was an important way to make sure that the word became part of a network of ideas.

Facets of Word Meaning

Students were asked to respond to various characteristics of the words to help them see a word not as a single block of meaning but as having different facets to its meaning. The purpose was to make students' word knowledge flexible so that they could both understand the word and apply the word to a variety of contexts. If a student's understanding of a word is limited to a narrow definition or stereotypical contexts (e.g., *delighted* is always used in association with receiving a gift), then many applications of the word will not be comprehensible and the student will have only limited opportunities to use the word in speech and writing.

One way we commonly used to reveal facets of meaning was an activity in which students were asked to differentiate between two descriptions by labeling them as an example or a nonexample of the target word. The descriptions were quite similar, differing only in features that were critical to the word's meaning. For example:

banter

A husband and wife argue about what to have for dinner.	A husband and wife kid each other about who ate more at dinner.
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impatient

A boy tells his friends about his birthday party and hopes they can come.	A boy counts the days until his birthday and wishes the time would go faster.
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retort

The player comes back with a quick answer after the referee calls a foul on him.	The player complains to the coach after the referee calls a foul on him.
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glum

The class decides to have a party indoors when they learn that the picnic has been rained out.	The class learns that the picnic has been rained out and they have to do work instead.
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berate

A police officer yells at a driver whose car is blocking traffic.	A police officer calls a tow truck to move a car that is blocking traffic.
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Relationships among Words

As a way of moving words beyond narrow associations, we designed activities around relationships among words. In one activity, we presented questions that juxtaposed two target words, such as "Could a *virtuoso* be a *rival*?" In pairing words that were not obviously related, the purpose was to make students pause and really consider whether a relationship existed. One student began to answer the *virtuoso/rival* question, saying: "No, because a *virtuoso* is somebody who is good at music and a *rival*—" He stopped in midsentence, and then continued with some excitement about his insight—"Oh! Yeah, it could be somebody who was good at music who was trying to be better than somebody else who was good at music!" So, suddenly this student saw the words not as straight, closed roads but as intersecting paths from which more complex ideas could be created.

Relationships are also very important because of the way individuals' word knowledge is stored in networks of connected ideas. Thus, the

more connections that can be built, the more opportunities there are for an individual to “get to” the knowledge. That means that the chances become greater and greater that words met will set off associations in the network and allow the learner to derive meaning from the contexts in which a word is used.

Additional Features:

Alternative Definitions and Time Constraints

Two other features also characterized what we call rich instruction. These were opportunities to interact with alternative definitions and to respond to words under time constraints.

Definitions for target words appeared several times during each week, and for each appearance we altered the definition somewhat. This was done so that students were not simply memorizing the definition but had to process the description of the word in a meaningful way. Thus, students were truly learning the concepts represented by the words rather than the mere wording of a definition. Here are examples of the definitions used over the course of a week’s sequence for two target words:

ambitious

1. Really wanting to succeed in becoming rich or important.
2. Wanting to get ahead by becoming powerful.
3. Wants great success in life.

stern

1. Being very strict about how you look and what you do.
2. Very demanding about how you and others behave.
3. Acts hard and serious.

Activities that were done under time constraints were included to help students develop rapid responses to the meanings of the words so that when the students met the words in a context—in a stream of speech or print—they would be accustomed to accessing the words’ meanings quickly. In an activity called “Beat the Clock,” students were given one and a half minutes to complete 14 items. Their score was the

number of items completed, minus any errors. Here are some sample items:

- *Shrill* sounds can hurt your ears.
true false
- *Gregarious* people would rather be alone.
true false
- It might be hard to have a conversation where there’s a *commotion*.
true false
- *Frank* people keep their thoughts to themselves.
true false

Beyond the Classroom

In addition to classroom activities, a component of our vocabulary program challenged students to take their word learning outside the classroom. We set up a system called Word Wizard, in which students gained points by bringing in evidence of hearing, seeing, or using target words outside the classroom. We did this not only to enliven the word environment but also because we realized that if students saw vocabulary learning as only a classroom exercise, they were unlikely to develop the kind of understanding about the words that would really enhance their literacy. The Word Wizard activity was highly successful—so much so that it took on a life of its own. We will discuss that activity and other related ones in Chapter 7, which focuses on creating a rich verbal environment.

When instruction is rich, frequent, and extends beyond the lesson and the classroom, we think of it as robust. That is, there is an energy and liveliness to it that pervades the classroom atmosphere. And its effects are clear and powerful. In the next section, we discuss the kinds of results we obtained from the rich, frequent, and extended instruction in our vocabulary research.

RESULTS OF FREQUENT, RICH, EXTENDED INSTRUCTION

What were students able to do after receiving frequent, rich, and extended instruction? Over the course of our vocabulary research, we

compared a group of students who had received rich instruction to two other groups of students: one group who had not been instructed, and another group who had received traditional, definition-based instruction. We also compared the effects of less frequent with more frequent encounters.

We examined students' learning on a variety of measures, and the pattern of results was that students who received rich, frequent instruction did better on a variety of measures. They were able to respond more quickly to word meanings in a timed task, and they showed better comprehension of stories containing the target words. In a final rather complex task, context interpretation, students who received rich instruction performed especially better than those who did not. In the context interpretation task, students respond to questions about sentences in which a target word was not used in typical ways. As such, the sentences and questions were constructed to require some complex thinking, let alone knowledge of the word being assessed. For example, students were shown this sentence: "After the prize winners were announced, Stacy ran up to console Meg." Then they were asked, "How do you think Meg had done in the contest?" Since the context invites the notion of congratulations, students then had to reason that if Stacy was consoling Meg, Meg must not have done very well.

Students who had participated in rich instruction were quite successful on this task. Students who had participated in the definition-based instruction, however, were less successful. They often responded to the questions by giving the definition of the word. So, in some sense they "knew" the word, but that knowledge did not help them where it counted. That is, they could not use it to bring meaning to a context. This seemed a particularly compelling result, because what literate people most often need to do with words is use them, not present definitions of them.

Beyond the results from the assessments, our observations in the classrooms demonstrated some other processes at work in these word-rich environments. Specifically, we noticed what we came to call "word ownership" in the students. They knew the words well, and used them easily and appropriately. They also reacted to uses of the words with relish and took obvious pleasure and pride in using them themselves. Another characteristic we noticed developing in the students was "word awareness." That is, not only were the students aware of target words that appeared in their environment, but they also began to take notice of

words in a more general way. Students even began drawing our attention to words that they thought we should have included in the program!

The discussion so far in this chapter has presented a generalized picture of purposes and activities that are appropriate for vocabulary development across grade levels from intermediate grades through high school. In the rest of this chapter, we present sequences of vocabulary activities for sets of words at three different levels: upper elementary, middle school, and high school.

UPPER ELEMENTARY GRADES EXAMPLE

We begin by presenting the activities for one set of words from the vocabulary program we created for our research. The program was implemented in fourth-grade classrooms in a small urban public school district. The instruction was arranged in 5-day cycles; the words were presented over 4 days, and on day 5 the students' knowledge of the words was assessed. We should note here that there is nothing magic about a 5-day cycle. Depending on how many words are being presented and the learning goal, less than a 5-day cycle and indeed more than a 5-day cycle can be appropriate. It is important, however, that attention be given to words on at least 2 days, so that there is some follow-up to simply introducing words. Our vocabulary program presented sets of words that were organized around themes. The reason for using themes was that we thought it would help students remember the words by giving them ready-made connections. We also thought that drawing on the themes might well help us in creating more coherent activities.

The theme of words for the example presented here was "How we use our eyes." The target words were *gape*, *squint*, *spectator*, *focus*, *scrutinize*, *glimpse*, *inspector*, and *binoculars*.

Day 1

On the first day the words were introduced using a set of pictures that illustrated each word. The teacher questioned the students about each picture in a way that elicited the meaning elements for the words and then presented a definition based on those elements. Students filled in the definitions on their log sheets. The words were then reviewed by

having the students match each word with its picture. Here are the words and the initial definitions:

Target words	Definitions
<i>gape</i>	to stare with your eyes and mouth wide open
<i>spectator</i>	a person who just watches something happen
<i>binoculars</i>	a special kind of glasses for making far away things seem close
<i>squint</i>	to partly close your eyes
<i>focus</i>	to make it easier to see clearly
<i>scrutinize</i>	to look at something very carefully in order to understand it better
<i>glimpse</i>	to catch a quick look
<i>inspector</i>	a person whose job is to check things

Days 2-4

The day after the above words had been introduced, instruction began with a sentence completion activity. The sentence stems, which appear below, were on students' log sheets. The activity was done together with the class. Students offered suggestions to complete a sentence, and through discussion a sentence was developed. Students wrote the agreed-upon sentence completion on their log sheets. The reason for having all students use the same sentence was to ensure that their log sheets had a strong example sentence as a permanent record. Below are the sentence stems for the "eyes" words:

- *gape*
Mom said I must have been really surprised at my birthday party because I _____.
- *spectator*
The teacher asked who wanted to be in the class play, but I said I didn't want to act in it, I just _____.
- *binoculars*
The bird singing up in the tree is too far away for me to see, so _____.

- *squint*
As I looked at the blackbird, the sunlight from the window got in my eyes, and it _____.
- *focus*
At first I thought the snowman was a real person, until I _____.
- *scrutinize*
I wasn't sure if those were freckles or measles I saw on my friend's face, so _____.
- *glimpse*
Dad asked me if I knew who the person on the roller-coaster was, but _____.
- *inspector*
Before the airplane could be cleared for take-off, the _____.

Another activity that was included on the second day asked students to choose between pairs of target words in responding to questions such as "Which would you do if you had trouble seeing clearly?" [*focus* or *gape*] We implemented the activity as a game with two teams. The teacher began by reading a story that ended with two characters challenging each other as to which had the "fastest eyes in the west." Each team represented one of the characters. For each question, the teacher wrote two words on the board, one under each character's name. The teams then had to applaud if the correct word was posted under their character's name. Here are the items for that activity:

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| <i>focus</i> | <i>gape</i> |
| ▪ Which would you probably do if you had trouble seeing clearly? | |
| <i>inspector</i> | <i>spectator</i> |
| ▪ What would you probably call every person watching a football game? | |
| <i>squint</i> | <i>gape</i> |
| ▪ Which would you probably do if you needed to wear glasses but didn't have any? | |
| <i>glimpse</i> | <i>scrutinize</i> |
| ▪ Which can you do more quickly? | |

gape *scrutinize*

- Which would you probably do if you wanted to concentrate *very* hard on understanding something?

gape *squint*

- Which would you probably do if some dust blew in your eyes?

spectator *inspector*

- Who would probably be careful when checking things to make sure they were done right?

binoculars *spectator*

- Which could you use to help you see where a baseball landed when a home run was hit?

focus *glimpse*

- Which would you probably do if you couldn't see clearly out of your binoculars?

About midway through a cycle of words, students had to select the target word that fit into a closed sentence. This activity often included words from previous sets, which are marked with an asterisk below. Here are the sentences from the activity sheet:

- The accomplice* wiped away the burglar's fingerprints before the police came, so the _____ couldn't find any clues to the crime. [*inspector*]
- The photographs I took always came out fuzzy until I learned how to _____ the camera. [*focus*]
- I wanted to find out which tree my kite got stuck in, but my friend seized* my _____ before I could look through them. [*binoculars*]
- That virtuoso* must have trouble seeing because she always _____ when she looks at the music. [*squirts*]
- I wasn't sure if the strange-looking vegetable on my plate was edible*, so I _____ it until I figured out what it was. [*scrutinized*]
- When my father came home dressed like a bunny rabbit, I really _____ at him! [*gaped*]
- My brother is going to lead the band in the parade. But I'm just going to watch and be a _____. [*spectator*]

Toward the end of an instructional cycle, there was often an activity that focused on how pairs of words were both alike and different. Students had to choose two words that fit descriptions such as "They're both things you do with your eyes that change the way your face looks. One makes you open your eyes wider than normal; the other makes you close them partly." [*gape* and *squint*] When the activity was completed, the class reviewed the answers together. Here are the rest of the items for the activity:

- They're both people who use their eyes in special ways. One watches something for fun; the other one checks things for a living. [*spectator/inspector*]
- They both have to do with food. With one, you eat a lot; with the other, you stay away from eating food. [*devour/fast*]
- They both have to do with seeing something. With one, you get so quick a look that you might not be sure of what you are seeing; with the other, you look very carefully to make yourself sure. [*glimpse/scrutinize*]
- They both have to do with taking hold of someone or something. With one, you hold someone lovingly; with the other, you grab suddenly. [*embrace/seize*]

The last instructional activity—the one before the next day's assessment—was a timed activity called "Ready, Set, Go." It consisted of four activity sheets, or "laps," which students completed as a partner timed them. Each sheet listed the words on one side and the definitions on the other, and the students had to match them by drawing lines to connect each word and definition. The order of the words for each lap was changed, and the wording of the definitions was altered a little to ensure that students were not just associating specific words with a target word. The goal was to see if one could get faster across the laps.

Day 5

At the end of our cycle of instruction, which in our case was on the fifth day, we assessed students' knowledge of the target words through a multiple-choice test. It is important to keep in mind that when we implemented our vocabulary instruction, we were engaged in a research

project that looked at what students had learned in various ways. After each cycle of instruction the assessment we used was a multiple-choice test. However, at the completion of the 12-week intervention, we assessed vocabulary understanding at deeper levels. Below we provide the multiple-choice test for the “eyes” theme. Then we discuss some general issues about assessment and provide some examples of assessments that are deeper than the multiple-choice test.

Note that in the items for the “eyes” words, each of the distracters—the incorrect choices—was related to the week’s theme, and the correct response was a wording of the definition different from the ones that students had worked with. Thus, it provided a moderately challenging assessment of their knowledge.

- *squint*
 - to give a mean look
 - to pretend you are asleep
 - to partly shut your eyes
 - to look down at your feet
- *focus*
 - to make more clear
 - to bother by staring at
 - to look at dreamily
 - to use glasses for reading
- *gape*
 - to blink several times in a row
 - to look wide-eyed and openmouthed
 - to roll your eyes
 - to raise your eyebrows
- *glimpse*
 - to take a picture of
 - to get only a peek
 - to shut your eyes tightly
 - to look hurt
- *spectator*
 - a person who is good at playing games
 - someone who doesn’t pay very good attention
 - a person who can’t see very well
 - someone who is watching something

- *binoculars*
 - a toy for looking at cartoon cards
 - a special thing used by doctors to test your eyes
 - special glasses for seeing far away
 - a mask to keep you from seeing
- *scrutinize*
 - look ashamed
 - try to remember what you see on a page
 - look cross-eyed
 - look carefully and closely
- *inspector*
 - someone who has a job checking things
 - a person who makes glasses
 - an eye doctor
 - a person who teaches blind people

Skip to Assessment

ASSESSMENT

Assessing what is learned about words relates to an issue we discussed at the outset of this book, that is, what does it mean to know a word? For example, a learner may be able to supply a synonym for a word but not know how to use it, or understand the context in which it appears but be unable to express its meaning. Such different configurations of knowledge would allow a learner to succeed on some kinds of assessments but not on others. So, when considering what kinds of assessment are appropriate, it is important to first consider the kind of learning that is the goal.

The most widely used measure of word knowledge is the multiple-choice format, such as the assessment we used earlier at the end of the "eyes" vocabulary cycle. The results of a multiple-choice test may be greatly influenced by the nature of the distracters—the incorrect choices. Distracters can introduce ideas that may confuse a learner by interfering with what the learner knows about a word. On the other

hand, if the distracters are very different from the meaning of the target word, a learner can get the item correct even with very limited knowledge of the word.

The changeable nature of multiple-choice items, however, can be used to advantage, to create tests that are purposely easier or more difficult and thus tap different levels of word knowledge. Consider, for example, a test item for *diligent* whose choices are (a) fast, (b) hardworking, (c) lost, and (d) punished. Compare that to the thinking required to select the correct choice for *diligent* from among (a) making a lot of money, (b) working at an interesting job, (c) always trying one's best, and (d) remembering everything.

Some researchers have taken a pessimistic view of the usefulness of multiple-choice tests (Kameenui et al., 1987), and some are more positive about their usefulness (Curtis, 1987). Curtis argues that, despite their drawbacks, they do provide some useful information. They give reliable indications of the relative range of an individual's vocabulary and correlate rather strongly with measures of reading comprehension. As a school assessment measure, they give useful information about where a student stands in vocabulary development in relation to his or her peers.

In sorting out issues related to assessment of vocabulary knowledge, it is useful to return to the notion that word knowledge falls along a continuum and to consider where along the continuum word knowledge can be assessed by different measures. Curtis (1987) has demonstrated that different pictures of word knowledge emerge from different criteria by testing fifth graders on a set of words using several different measures. She found that on a checklist where students were asked to respond *yes* if they knew a word, students' reporting was correct about 80% of the time. When asked to explain the meaning of the words, 70% could pass a very easy criterion such as describing *invent* as "to invent a machine." When the criterion involved giving an example or partial explanation, 50% of the responses were correct. Only 20% were correct for a conservative criterion that required synonyms or complete explanations.

A very important consideration is Curtis's (1981) finding that the completeness or precision of knowledge in an individual's vocabulary repertoire differentiates high- and low-ability college students. In her study, undergraduates took a traditional multiple-choice test and then were interviewed about the tested words. From the interviews, Curtis

found that low-ability students not only knew fewer of the tested words but also had less knowledge of the words they knew. Specifically, they were only able to provide correct explanations for about half the words they had gotten correct on the multiple-choice test. This finding points to the need both to teach words deeply and to measure them deeply.

There are a variety of tasks that can assess deeper levels of word knowledge. Many of the formats that we used in the activities developed for our vocabulary program can also be used as assessment formats. Consider the following:

- Ask students what words mean.
- Have students create examples such as these:
 - Describe how someone acts that shows they are *diligent*.
 - Tell about a time you were *perplexed*.
 - Describe some things that could make a person feel *miserable*.
- Present items that ask students to distinguish between an example of a word and a nonexample of a word, such as those presented as an instructional activity at the beginning of this chapter. Both the example and the nonexample should be designed to present situations that have similar features and thus require student thinking that zeros in on the meaning of the target word.

proclaim

A woman refuses to talk to reporters about the election.	A women tells reports which candidate won the election.
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commend

Your teacher tells you to have your parents come in for a conference.	Your teacher tells your parents how well you are doing in school.
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mention

Our neighbors once told us that they had lived in Florida.	Our neighbors are always talking about when they lived in Florida.
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- Ask students to describe what is alike and/or different for pairs of words that are semantically similar (Graves, 1980). The following word pairs would be useful in such an assessment:

—*berate/retort*

—*seize/embrace*

—*acquaintance/ally*

—*exotic/unique*

—*extraordinary/peculiar*

- Ask students to place word phrases on a word line that represents a continuum, and to explain their placement of the various items. An important point here is that there is no correct ordering of the items. The value of the format is in eliciting students explanations that involve target word meanings. Also, the fact that this format is fun is a nice dimension to add to assessment. Below are several examples:

How much energy does it take to . . .

1. *meander* down the hall?
2. *vault* over a car?
3. *banter* with your best friend for an hour?
4. *berate* someone at the top of your voice?
5. *stalk* a turtle?
6. be a *spectator* at a concert?

Least energy _____ Most energy

How happy would you be . . .

1. after *trudging* home through the rain?
2. if the President *commended* you for being brave?
3. if your mother *urged* you to have a second piece of cake?
4. if you thought someone was *stalking* you?
5. if a herd of sheep *meandered* into your living room?
6. if everyone in your class looked *glum*?

Least happy _____ Most happy

How surprised would you be if . . .

1. you saw your friend *vault* over the moon?
2. your teacher *commended* you for doing good work?

3. a dog started *bantering* with you?
4. the mayor *urged* everyone to leave town?
5. a coach *berated* his football team for not making a touchdown?
6. a rabbit *trudged* through a garden?

Least surprised _____ Most surprised

Earlier in this chapter we described a “context interpretation” task in which students responded to questions about sentences containing target words. The important point about this task is that it requires students to go beyond thinking about a word’s definition. Rather, it requires applying the word’s meaning to understand the context of its use. The task can be made more or less challenging depending on whether the contexts show typical or not so typical uses for the target word. Note that in the examples below, the first item is more challenging, as someone is commended in an unexpected situation—for destroying something in anger; the other examples show more typical uses:

- When father heard that Lisa had ripped up the letter from Steve, father *commended* her for it. What do you think father thought of Steve?
- When Sam and I arrived at Alvin’s front door, I had to *urge* Sam to knock on the door. How do you think Sam felt about going to Alvin’s house?
- Rhonda sent out wedding invitations to all the family, including Uncle Charles, who was a *hermit*. What do you think Uncle Charles’s answer was to the invitation?
- Mr. Robinson, the high school principal, was in a very good mood after his meeting with the *philanthropist*. Why do you think Mr. Robinson was happy?
- Mary thought that Jim was *ridiculing* her when he said that the cake she made looked beautiful. How do you think Mary thought her cake looked?
- Jerome told us he was a *novice*, but when we heard him play the piano we knew he had been kidding us. What do you think Jerome’s piano playing sounded like?
- Everyone whom Paul met at his new school was very much alike,

except for Dan who was an *extrovert*. How do you think Dan acted toward Paul?

- At the baseball game Tony thought his chances of hitting a home run were *thwarted* when Rusty came on to pitch. What do you think Tony thought of Rusty's pitching?

The message about vocabulary assessment is that the assessments should match the goals. If fairly straightforward knowledge is the goal, then multiple-choice items can be appropriate. If deeper knowledge is the goal, then the more complex formats noted above are more likely to provide the kind of information that will allow teachers to determine whether students have gained complete, precise, or deep understanding.

• You Try It •

Select one or more of the assessments:

- Write some sentence stems for words that your students are learning.
- Create some questions that have students choosing one of two vocabulary words as the answer.
- Develop some assessment items for words that you have selected for your students to learn.

IN SUMMARY

Throughout this chapter, and indeed throughout this book, we have emphasized the importance of keeping vocabulary work going—following up the introduction of meanings—and using words outside of class. The reasons that these are so essential to learning new words is that words can only truly be learned through use. The nuances, subtleties, and characteristics of a word's role in the language can only be understood through repeated exposures to the word in a variety of contexts. A definition, no matter how well crafted, can never communicate all of this. That is why students need to look for contexts of use and bring those into the classroom for discussion, so that each context can add dimension to what is known about a word. The need for multiple uses becomes even more

critical at the upper grades because the words are more sophisticated and thus more multidimensional and distinctions among them more subtle.

• Your Turn •

We invite you to use what you have learned in this chapter to develop some ideas for supporting students in thinking about a set of words that you have selected from a text that they are reading.

Describe your rationale for selecting the words. Then, develop questions to help students explore the facets of each word's meaning. Finally, create some assignments that will engage students in using the words in meaningful ways.